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Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 04146 201414Z

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

ACDA-19 EUR-25 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 DRC-01 /144 W
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P R 201320Z DEC 73
FM USINT CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4797
INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

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GENEVA FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: MOPS EG IS UN
SUBJECT: UN BRIEFING DECEMBER 20: CEASEFIRE INCIDENTS

1. IN REGULARLY SCHEDULED PRESS BRIEFING DECEMBER 20, UN SPOKESMAN STAJDUHAR REPORTED THAT ON DECEMBER 18, UNEF HAD RECEIVED 68 CEASEFIRE INCIDENTS, THE HIGHEST TO THAT DATE. MAJOR INCIDENTS HAD OCCURRED IN AREAS SOUTH OF ABU SUWEIR AND NIFISHA (BOTH IN ISMAILIYYA SECTOR); EAST OF BALLAH (ISMAILLIYYA/KANTARA SECTOR); AND SUEZ CITY. IN CLASHES NEAR SUEZ CITY, ONE UN SUPPLY BUILDING WAS HIT BY SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM BOTH SIDES; UN FORCES TOOK NO CASUALTIES. THIS INCIDENT ELICITED PROTEST FROM SIILASVUO TO BOTH SIDES. DURING INCIDENTS, VARIOUS TYPES OF WEAPONRY WERE USED, INCLUDING ARTILLERY, MORTARS, MACHINE GUNS AND TANK CANNON. SPOKESMAN, IN REPLY TO QUESTION, STATED
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 04146 201414Z

THAT CEASEFIRE WAS "STILL HOLDING," AND WENT ON TO NOTE

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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THAT MOST INCIDENTS WERE OF LESS THAN TEN MINUTES DURATION.

2. UN DID NOT REGISTER APPRECIABLE CHANGE OF POSITION ON EITHER SIDE, ALTHOUGH GOI LODGED TWO COMPLAINTS THAT EGYPTIAN FORCES HAD MOVED FORWARD IN JEBEL ATAQA AND KM 101 AREAS. (ON DECEMBER 17, UN REGISTERED EGYPTIAN ADVANCE OF ONE AND ONE-HALF KILOMETERS IN ABU SUWEIR AREA AND ISRAELI ADVANCE OF TWO KILOMETERS SOUTH OF ADABIYYA, NEAR SUEZ.)

3. UN SPOKESMAN ALSO NOTED PRELIMINARY REPORT OF INTENSE FIRING NEAR UNEF TROOPS, WITH USE OF MACHINE GUNS AND MORTARS, IN SUEZ CITY AREA ON NIGHT OF DECEMBER 19. HE DECLINED TO REPLY TO QUESTIONS RE WHO STARTED FIRING.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE FACT THAT NUMBER OF INCIDENTS REPORTED IS HIGHEST TO DATE, IT FALLS WITHIN GENERALLY HIGH PATTERN OF SUCH CASES OVER THE PAST TWO TO THREE WEEKS. STAJDUHAR WAS QUITE INSISTENT THAT THEY DID NOT REPRESENT MORE THAN MOMENTARY AND SPORADIC "INCIDENTS" RATHER THAN BREACHES OF CEASEFIRE. DECEMBER 21 CAIRO PRESS WILL PROBABLY GIVE A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT STORY; STAJDUHAR HIMSELF HAS BEEN OVER-HEARD TO COMPLAIN THAT EGYPTIAN PRESS REPORTS HAVE LITTLE RELATIONSHIP TO WHAT HE SAYS IN BRIEFINGS.
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